

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 1039

By Akbari

A RESOLUTION to honor Pastor Robert J. Matthews upon his outstanding career in the ministry.

WHEREAS, it is appropriate that this General Assembly should recognize those venerable religious leaders who, through their unflinching capacity for love, dedication of spirit, and faith in God, enrich the lives of the people in their communities; and

WHEREAS, Pastor Robert J. Matthews is a trailblazer for his Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and has served with distinction as the pastor of New Hope Baptist Church of Memphis since October 1990; and

WHEREAS, a native of Memphis, Pastor Matthews received his Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff in June 1969, his Master of Education degree from the University of Memphis in December 1974, and did his postgraduate studies at Trevecca Nazarene College; and

WHEREAS, he attributes his growth as a preacher to his continuing studies in religion and theology at Tennessee Baptist School of Religion, from which he earned a Bachelor of Theology degree; Mid-America Theological Seminary; and Memphis Theological Seminary; and

WHEREAS, with the exception of the period from September 1977 to August 1978, when he served as a congressional assistant, Pastor Matthews taught music and English in the public schools of Memphis from October 1969 to June 2003; and

WHEREAS, in October 1990, Pastor Matthews was led by the Holy Spirit to accept his present assignment at New Hope Baptist Church of Memphis; under his inspired guidance as Senior Pastor, New Hope has grown by leaps and bounds, both numerically, by approximately 600 members, and more importantly, spiritually; and

WHEREAS, Pastor Matthews has used his innovative style to revitalize existing ministries and his God-given wisdom to implement new ones; his love for the Lord's people continues to be the driving force that motivates him to labor tirelessly in the vineyard, and his spirit of commitment and dedication to excellence is evident in every aspect of his ministry; and

WHEREAS, Pastor Matthews was elected pastor October 2, 1990, and his first sermon at New Hope was entitled "Walking Together with the Lord" (Genesis 5:24); and

WHEREAS, through the dynamic leadership of Pastor Matthews, New Hope's facilities were greatly improved, new ministries were established, existing ones were energized, and inactive members began to work; and

WHEREAS, twenty-five ministries have either been established or revitalized during Pastor Matthews' tenure, including the Mighty Men of Valor, which led to the institution of several programs: the Men's Convocation, Junior Trusted Partners Sunday School class, a mentoring program, the Youth and Young Adult Ministry, the Sisterhood in Christ Ministry, the Praise Dance Ministry, and the Banner Ministry Drill Team; and

WHEREAS, the Youth and Young Adults held their first overnight retreat under Pastor Matthews tutelage; and

WHEREAS, on November 19, 1995, the congregation moved to the location for a new church building in Bellevue and dedicated the property; a groundbreaking ceremony was held on January 7, 2001. On Resurrection Sunday, March 25, 2002, the New Hope congregation held the grand opening for their Family Life Center, which also serves as the Worship Center; and

WHEREAS, in addition to his duties at New Hope, Pastor Matthews serves as the Dean of Music for the Southwest Region of the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc.; and

WHEREAS, he is blessed to share love and companionship with his wife, Georgia, New Hope's first lady, and their supportive children; and

WHEREAS, this legislative body is delighted to recognize this committed Christian minister, for Pastor Robert J. Matthews is an eminent citizen of Tennessee and Memphis; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED EIGHTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we honor Pastor Robert J. Matthews upon his outstanding ministry as Senior Pastor at New Hope Baptist Church of Memphis, thank him for bringing faith and hope to the lives of thousands of Christians, and extend to Pastor Matthews our best wishes for much continued success and happiness in the years to come.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.